

Appln. Serial No. 10/697,154
Amendment dated 9/22/05
Reply to Office action of 06/22/2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended). A slam latch and strike assembly for releasably connecting together two adjacent support members that are relatively displaceable between a generally planar closed position and a relatively laterally displaced open position, comprising:

- (a) a generally tubular body adapted for connection with a first one of said support members, said body having a vertical longitudinal axis and a horizontal divider wall defining upper and lower chambers in said body, said body having at its lower end a wall portion containing a transverse opening communicating with said lower chamber;
- (b) a latch member mounted in said wall opening for axial displacement between retracted and extended positions relative to said body, said latch member including a first end portion that extends from said housing when said latch member is in said extended position;
- (c) spring means biasing said latch member toward said extended position relative to said body;
- (d) release means for displacing said latch toward said retracted position relative to said body; and
- (e) a strike member adapted for connection with a second one of said support members at a location adjacent said latch first end when said latch member is in said extended position, said strike member having a longitudinal axis generally parallel with said body longitudinal axis;
- (f) said latch member first end portion and said strike member having adjacent generally parallel surfaces each provided with a series of cooperating ratcheting latch teeth and strike teeth, respectively,
 - (1) said latch teeth and said strike teeth being in engagement when said latch is in said extended position and said support members are in said relatively closed position;

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- (2) the ratcheting configuration of said latch teeth and said strike teeth being such as to permit movement of said support members toward said closed position, but to prevent movement of said support members toward said open position;
- (3) ~~at least one of said adjacent latch end and strike member surfaces being convex, the transverse tips and valleys of the teeth carried by said convex surface being curved and having a radius of curvature corresponding generally to the radius of curvature of said convex surface; said latch teeth and said strike teeth, when in the engaged condition, having transverse tips contained in vertically spaced horizontal planes, respectively, all of said tips being curved and convex,~~ thereby to compensate for slight misalignment between said latch and strike members.

2. Cancelled.

3. (currently amended) A slam latch and strike assembly as defined in claim 2 1, wherein said strike member is cylindrical and has a circular cross-sectional configuration, the tips of said strike teeth being circular, said strike member containing a longitudinal bore for receiving a fastening member.

4. (currently amended) A slam latch and strike assembly as defined in claim 1, wherein said strike member has a generally polygonal cross-sectional configuration, and the tips of said strike teeth are arcuate.

5. (currently amended) A slam latch and strike assembly ~~as defined in claim 1, wherein said release means includes:~~ for releasably connecting together two adjacent support members that are relatively displaceable between a generally planar closed position and a relatively laterally displaced open position, comprising:

- (a) a generally tubular body adapted for connection with a first one of said support members, said body having a vertical longitudinal axis and a horizontal divider wall defining upper and lower chambers in said body.

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- said body having at its lower end a wall portion containing a transverse opening communicating with said lower chamber;
- (b) a latch member mounted in said wall opening for axial displacement between retracted and extended positions relative to said body, said latch member including a first end portion that extends from said housing when said latch member is in said extended position;
- (c) spring means biasing said latch member toward said extended position relative to said body;
- (d) release means for displacing said latch toward said retracted position relative to said body, said release means including:
- (1) a release handle pivotally connected with said body for pivotal

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